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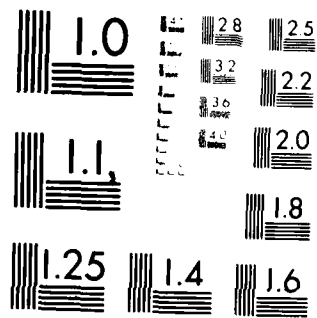
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# TRENDS IN SOVIET MILITARY POLICY

Benjamin S. Lambeth

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## TRENDS IN SOVIET MILITARY POLICY

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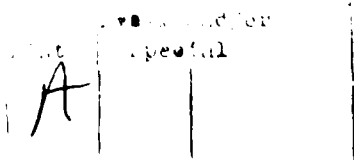
### INTRODUCTION

The American defense community and the attentive public are once again in the throes of a wide-ranging debate over the nature of the Soviet military challenge. This debate has been partly abetted by a skillful Soviet effort to project a contrast between Soviet "reasonableness" and American obduracy in the superpower relationship. Mainly, however, it has stemmed from a steady erosion of the fragile national consensus regarding Soviet motivations and their implications for Western security that was first formed in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

The sources of this resurgent disagreement over the Soviet threat (and, relatedly, over the appropriate agenda for U.S. defense planning) are both internal and external. On the first count, the massive increases in defense spending sought by the Reagan administration have not resonated well among many constituencies, in light of pervasive economic difficulties, mounting pressures for budgetary stringency, and the administration's continued lack of success in articulating a coherent strategy that might justify its program proposals.<sup>1</sup> On top of this, the substantial toughening of the administration's declaratory rhetoric toward the Soviet Union has conjured up widespread popular fears of an increased danger of nuclear war.<sup>2</sup> Not only has this exacerbated the administration's effort to place the U.S. defense posture back on a strong footing; it has also given rise to increasingly vocal Congressional and public demands for a negotiated nuclear "freeze,"

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which most defense analysts believe would be highly premature given the numerous military imbalances that presently favor the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup>

In the external realm, these domestic difficulties have been compounded by a powerful blend of nervous indecision within NATO and a carefully orchestrated Soviet propaganda campaign aimed at discrediting official U.S. depictions of the Soviet strategic threat.<sup>4</sup> This latter effort, coupled with Moscow's ongoing "peace offensive" and vigorous advocacy of all varieties of arms control, has fostered a rising groundswell of neopacifism and resistance to nuclear force modernization in Western Europe and thereby deepened further the traditional division of outlook between the United States and NATO. It has also lent encouragement to those individuals within and around the American defense community who have always been disposed to interpret Soviet military programs and behavior in the most benign possible light. The fact that Soviet power and assertiveness have continued to grow uninterrupted in the years since the collapse of detente, with motivations clearly inimical to Western security interests, has failed even to produce a commonly agreed Western understanding of the problem, let alone a military response appropriate to its demands.

In an era that has become increasingly dominated by Cold War battle fatigue and resistance to high defense budgets when more immediate economic and social needs remain unattended, it is easy to understand how the administration's efforts to dramatize the Soviet challenge should merely serve as lightning rods for domestic controversy rather than as credible foundations for a broadly supported national strategy. Given the striking contrast between Soviet military program momentum and continued U.S. irresolution over what to do about it, one must fear that disagreement over Soviet motivations has become consigned to remain a permanent feature of the defense policy process--*whatever* the realities of Soviet conduct might be.

Much of the reason for this continued confusion over the nature of Soviet military activity lies in the tendency of American defense debates to fixate on technological marginalia rather than on the more fundamental premises that have energized Soviet military programs over the past decade and a half. This paper aims to help correct that mis-

directed focus. It is not principally concerned with hardware specifics, such as the numbers and performance characteristics of Soviet weapons. Although these specifics cannot be ignored by defense planners, they are less important for informing a purposeful defense policy than awareness of the broader underpinnings of Soviet military conduct--how the Soviets perceive their security predicament, why their programs have assumed the shape they have, and what these programs reveal about underlying Soviet strategic goals.

Concentration on the material elements of Soviet power at the exclusion of these larger matters runs the risk of missing the forest for the trees. It obstructs consideration of the important operational axioms that shape the context in which Soviet defense decisions get made. Yet these broader axioms that make up Soviet strategy and constitute the key link between Soviet budget planning and force capabilities are critical to a correct understanding of the Soviet strategic challenge. It is not any specific weapon (or combination of weapons) in the Soviet inventory that fundamentally gives rise to the Western security problem. Through proper countervailing R&D and procurement programs, such things can be readily accommodated if only the resources and willingness to commit them are present. What is more important for clear-headed Western defense planning is a solid appreciation of the overarching strategic vision that lends direction and purpose to Soviet military programs. Without this, U.S. and NATO responses to Soviet force improvements will continue to be episodic and short-sighted, reactive solely to the hardware manifestations of Soviet strategy rather than to the strategy itself.

Another cost of narrow concentration on hardware rather than on Soviet concepts and operating styles is its tendency to perpetuate the widespread misconception that the two superpowers are engaged in a purely technological "arms race" divorced from any political or strategic context. Of course, the Soviet Union and the United States both employ comparable systems in their respective arsenals (ICBMs, SLBMs, long-range bombers, and so on). But a perspective on these tangibles that ignores their underlying rationales can easily mislead us into believing that both sides are driven by common views of the security

problem and are pursuing similar strategies toward similar ends. The truth is that the superpowers are worlds apart in their view of the deterrence dilemma and speak anything but a common strategic language.

To be sure, certitudes about the sources of Soviet military conduct are not easy to come by. Although the Churchillian image of the USSR as a "riddle wrapped in mystery inside an enigma" is plainly inappropriate to the transparent facts of Soviet military capability, we obviously have few reliable insights into the inner workings of Soviet defense decisionmaking. After all, the Soviet Union does not publish annual military budget figures, posture statements, its equivalent of our Congressional deliberations, and other sorts of raw data freely available in the West. As a consequence, many of the factors that influence the Soviet force posture necessarily remain obscure.

Moreover, even overt indicators like formal doctrine are not always self-explanatory. Fritz Ermarth and others who have thoughtfully pondered the dilemmas of threat assessment over the years have usefully distinguished between what might be termed intelligence "secrets" and intelligence "mysteries." The former involve hard knowables that we are simply prevented from uncovering (the nature of Soviet war plans, weapons capabilities, targeting objectives, and so on). The latter involve intangibles that may not be entirely clear even to the Soviets. These are supremely matters of interpretation rather than fact and must be derived largely through analysis and informed inference. The relationship between doctrine and policy, the interactive influences between technology and strategy, and what the Soviet leadership might do in a given contingency are examples of this class of questions.<sup>5</sup>

It is to this latter category of concerns that the present essay is principally directed. It will review the major doctrinal inputs into Soviet military policy, indicate important distinctions between Soviet and American approaches where appropriate, and survey the changing nature of Soviet military capabilities so as to underscore their growing congruence with long-standing Soviet strategy.



THE DOCTRINAL BASIS OF SOVIET DEFENSE POLICY

The central elements of Soviet thinking on the requirements of deterrence are embodied in Soviet military doctrine, a formal body of authoritative precepts on the nature of the threat environment and its imperatives for Soviet weapons acquisition and use. This doctrine is a product of the services, the military academies, and the General Staff. It is continually reviewed at the top echelons of the Defense Ministry and carries the endorsement of the Party leadership. Unlike the strategic "doctrines" of the United States, which have been repeatedly buffeted over the years by budgetary pressures and shifting fashions in strategy as each successive administration has sought to reshape U.S. defense policy into its own preferred image, Soviet doctrine has remained remarkably constant since it first began to crystallize in the early 1960s. It is described by Soviet writings as a comprehensive body of views on the nature and requirements of modern war which enjoys the status of accepted national policy.

In its conceptual fundamentals, Soviet doctrine combines a Hobbesian world outlook with Clausewitzian teachings on war. Soviet military theory regards the superpower relationship as one dominated by irreconcilable differences and laden with dangers of war sufficient enough to oblige Soviet planners to undertake every necessary measure for its eventuality. Although the Soviets concede that the destructiveness of nuclear weapons has dramatically reduced the probability of such a war, they maintain that global conflict can nonetheless occur through accident, inadvertence, or willful enemy aggression. Given the awesome consequences of nuclear war, deterrence is naturally the top Soviet priority. Yet unlike many in the West, the Soviets reject the complacent notion that deterrence is automatically guaranteed merely by the existence of large inventories of nuclear weapons on both sides. Instead, they recognize that deterrence can fail despite the best efforts of each side to preserve it.

In these circumstances, the Soviets feel obligated to maintain a capacity to take prompt military initiatives aimed at seizing and holding the operational advantage in any crisis in which war, sooner or later, has become inescapable. One of the problems for Soviet-

American stability posed by this Hobbesian view of the threat is the inability of Soviet leaders to settle on any natural end point to their efforts at arms accumulation. Instead, they appear determined to seek absolute security regardless of the cost in terms of broader East-West tension. While this orientation does not bespeak any inherent Soviet tendencies toward gratuitous aggressiveness, it necessarily implies a situation of absolute insecurity for everybody else. This, for good reason, is unacceptable to the United States and goes far toward explaining the persistence of superpower arms competition notwithstanding efforts to ameliorate it through such measures as SALT (and now START).<sup>6</sup>

This belief that war is a continuing possibility requiring relentless force improvement naturally leads to a corollary in Soviet strategic thinking: that victory for the Soviet Union--even in unrestricted nuclear warfare--is theoretically attainable if the proper measures are undertaken. Here, Soviet theory follows a path markedly divergent from that pursued by the United States since the beginnings of the nuclear age. American views on the nuclear issue have their origins in a body of academic writings running back to the late 1940s, when the revolutionary implications of the Hiroshima experience were first being pondered in U.S. intellectual and scientific circles. The consensus that emerged from this ferment and gradually came to shape authoritative U.S. civilian leadership thinking held that the advent of nuclear weapons marked a fundamental disjuncture in the trend line of arms development that had characterized all pre-nuclear history. Because of their unprecedented damage potential, nuclear weapons had, in this view, invalidated all the preexisting rules of strategy and made war involving their use unacceptable as a tool of policy. Since no one could rationally contemplate meaningful "victory" in such a war, so this argument went, deterrence had become the sole legitimate function of military power and thus the only appropriate goal of strategic planning.<sup>7</sup>

Over the nearly four decades since this initial groundswell of theorizing, these ideas have remained persistent undercurrents in the various permutations of U.S. nuclear policy. McNamara's flirtations with a counterforce doctrine, Secretary Schlesinger's attempted reforms

aimed at imposing a measure of controllability on nuclear crises through development of selective targeting, and the more recent attempts to refine U.S. options even further via PD-59 and subsequent amendments to U.S. nuclear planning guidance have all sought to provide the American leadership with alternatives other than suicide or surrender. Yet despite these laudable efforts to acquire more flexible employment options, neither the public rhetoric of any American president (the present incumbent included) nor the hardware ingredients of the U.S. nuclear posture has shown a substantial departure from the abiding disbelief in the "winnability" of nuclear war that has influenced U.S. nuclear policy since its earliest years.<sup>8</sup> Despite notable advances in the operational capabilities of U.S. forces and comparable increases in the sophistication and coverage of U.S. targeting plans, the American arsenal still lacks any significant means of active defense against nuclear attack and relies heavily on mutual vulnerability for enforcing Soviet restraint and preserving deterrence.

For their part, the Soviets have shown no attraction whatever to this intellectual baggage that has been associated with American and NATO defense planning throughout the postwar years. They reject "mutual assured destruction" as a consummate abandonment of leadership responsibility. Instead, they have sought to prevent war by relying on the classic injunction *si vis pacem, para bellum*. In modern terms of strategic discourse, they have long articulated (and increasingly sought forces to support) a strategy of deterrence based on denial rather than punishment. Moreover, not only have they sought to deny the West a credible war option, they have gone the significant further step of striving to develop a plausible war-waging option of their own. They have done this not merely out of doctrinal preference, but out of their conviction that the responsibilities of national stewardship allow no other choice.<sup>9</sup>

This distinctive approach to the nuclear problem has led the Soviets to adopt and refine what has come to be called in the West a "war-fighting" survival doctrine.<sup>10</sup> That they have done so does not mean the Soviets are spoiling for war or have confidence that any "victory" worth having would actually be attainable by the Soviet

Union, even in the most optimistic scenario Soviet planners might entertain. It does mean, however, that Soviet leaders regard "mutual assured destruction" as a suicide pact and would prefer even a Pyrrhic victory to a Pyrrhic defeat. In their view, a force capable of dominating events in war is more likely to ensure deterrence in peacetime and crises than is one--whether for reasons of choice or neglect--that lacks those operational attributes. There is a vast difference between a theory of war that includes a well-defined image of victory and high confidence in its attainability (neither of which the Soviets show any evidence of possessing) and the idea that a credible war-waging posture for worst-case contingencies is something worth having in principle. It would be a considerable exaggeration to assert that the Soviet leadership is anywhere close to nurturing self-satisfied convictions that it "could fight and win a nuclear war," as one periodically hears from some quarters in the ongoing defense debate.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, Soviet strategic planning takes place in a conceptual universe fundamentally unlike that of the Western powers and has force posture implications that are anything but good news for U.S. and NATO security.

#### THE IMPACT OF DOCTRINE ON FORCE POSTURE

A closer approximation of Soviet strategic goals than either the "war-fighting" or "victory" formulas may lie in the notion that military planning should aim to provide the Soviet armed forces a capability to control events at all levels of conflict, ranging from local and theater conventional war to unrestricted intercontinental nuclear warfare. The more one becomes captured by the technical details of Soviet hardware and combat repertoires, the easier it is to forget that the main motivation for Soviet force improvement remains deterrence, not war. In this image of preparedness, elusive absolutes like "superiority" and "victory" are less important than the maintenance of a force structure whose attributes, in an inherently uncertain world, might impose an "asymmetry of anxiety" upon the Soviet Union's adversaries and thereby enhance deterrence on terms congenial to Soviet interests.

Put differently, it is plausible that the Soviet buildup over the past 15 years has not really sought so much a high-confidence capability

to achieve victory in war as a capacity to secure and enforce the *fruits* of victory without the need to resort to war in the first place. Richard Pipes argues that Lenin and his various successors effectively turned Clausewitz on his head by "transforming politics into the waging of war by other means."<sup>12</sup> This idea is certainly compatible with the apparent contradiction between the Soviet Union's propensity to engage in global interventionism and its well-developed aversion to risk.<sup>13</sup> It makes particular sense, moreover, in light of the Soviet belief that nuclear weapons have by no means invalidated the legitimacy of intimidation strategies, even as they have rendered them far more dangerous.

One way out of this dilemma for the Soviets is a force-development approach that tries to make the best of all worlds by providing Moscow advantages in military muscle whose actual combat effectiveness might be problematic, yet whose capabilities (as perceived by adversaries) might be sufficient in peacetime to allow Soviet leaders to pursue their ambitions in an environment in which the danger of war would be minimized. Whether or not this logic entirely reflects private Soviet leadership thinking and planning, one can observe enough disturbing tendencies to the Soviet advantage that have emanated from the changed "correlation of forces" over the past decade to appreciate its attractions.

To cite some examples, Moscow's attainment of parity in central systems has all but neutralized the capacity of the U.S. strategic posture to ensure escalation dominance in Europe and has thereby substantially decoupled the latter from its erstwhile role as a linchpin of NATO's defense. At the same time, by successfully exploiting a decade of SALT negotiations to help postpone the development of enhanced U.S. hard-target kill capabilities, the Soviets have thus far avoided what almost surely would otherwise have been massive pressures to assure the continued survivability of their own ICBM forces. This, in turn, has freed them to concentrate SRF resource allocations in recent years on improving their theater nuclear capabilities through extensive deployment of the SS-20 and follow-on systems. Finally, under this expanded umbrella of intercontinental and theater nuclear

capabilities, the Soviets have continued to broaden their conventional options through improvements in ground-force versatility and the acquisition of new, deep-penetration tactical fighter assets.

The result of all this has been to alter considerably the former imbalances in the NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation that favored the Western powers during the days of American strategic superiority. Of course, it would be wrong to attribute solely to this changed strategic balance all the current ills of NATO (renascent pacifism and popular antinuclear sentiment, deepening separatism, unresolved disagreements over theater nuclear force modernization, and flagging appreciation and support for U.S. global concerns that bear heavily on NATO's security, among others). There is little doubt, however, that the growing convergence of Soviet doctrine and capabilities has created problems for the Alliance that have yet to be met by an equally coherent U.S. and NATO response.

Formal doctrine is far more influential in governing the direction and character of Soviet force development than it tends to be in pluralistic societies, where doctrine is frequently a less than authoritative statement of highest-level national goals. In the United States and NATO, military "doctrine" is more often than not a reflection of narrow service or other parochial interests. As such, it has to contend with a variety of cross-cutting secular interests, institutional pressures, and budgetary demands in the continuing process of force improvement. This is why American declaratory policy, R&D planning, action policies, contingency plans, and force developments have so often been out of phase with each other. The inevitable results have been "strategy/force mismatches," dramatic shifts in the slogans of U.S. national security policy, and periodic domestic crises (like the one currently facing the Reagan defense program) over funding practices that show no obvious relationship to any unifying theme. The Soviet Union is hardly immune in day-to-day governmental activity to its own version of bureaucratic politics, organization processes, and related strains that are part and parcel of politics in any modern industrial society. Nevertheless, it remains a distinctive feature of totalitarian systems--not only in the military sphere but in other realms--

that while their leaders may be wrong, they are rarely confused about their goals.

This has not always been true in the case of the Soviet Union, however. It would thus be wrong to infer from the foregoing remarks that there is anything *automatic* about the connectivity between Soviet doctrine and force structure. Although in recent years there has emerged a very close correlation between the two, the essential catalyst bringing them into harmony has been the Soviet political process. The changed character of Party support to military interests, and not doctrine in isolation, has been the real force behind the major gains in size and versatility enjoyed by the Soviet armed forces since the advent of the Brezhnev regime. After all, as noted above, the basic content of Soviet doctrine has remained relatively stable since the early 1960s, when the initial post-Stalin military debates finally produced the broad policy consensus reflected in Marshal Sokolovskii's *Voennaiia Strategia*.<sup>14</sup> Such basic themes as surprise, shock, simultaneity, mass, momentum, superiority, and the feasibility of victory have long been familiar refrains of the Soviet military literature. What has changed has not been doctrine but the Soviet force posture itself. That development can only be explained by the disposition of the incumbent leadership to underwrite the edicts of doctrine with appropriate resource allocations.

Throughout the Khrushchev era, one may recall, the Party and armed forces were locked in a thoroughgoing adversary relationship. Khrushchev delighted in heaping scorn on what he termed those "thick-headed types you find wearing uniforms."<sup>15</sup> He once remarked during an interview: "I do not trust the advice of generals on questions of strategic importance."<sup>16</sup> His own military policies--including plans for massive manpower reductions, his dismissal of air and naval forces as being obsolete in the nuclear age, his propensity to rely on a minimum deterrent based solely on strategic missiles, and ultimately his abortive venture in Cuba in 1962--were all informed by notions that lay well outside the mainstream of professional Soviet military thought. Although Khrushchev's failings in the military realm were by no means the only ones that led to his undoing in 1964, he clearly

had no use for martial values and was anything but a willing supporter of the military's institutional interests. In the aftermath of his ouster, Chief of the General Staff Zakharov transparently indicated the military's relief when he openly scored the "harebrained schemes" and so-called "strategic far-sightedness" of "persons who lack even a remote knowledge of military strategy."<sup>17</sup>

Obviously things have changed a great deal in the intervening years. Essentially, the Brezhnev regime appears to have accepted Soviet military doctrine as its own belief system and has agreed--at least in principle--to observe its broad teachings as appropriate guides for Soviet military development. Perhaps the most revealing indication of this transformation, aside from the Soviet buildup itself, has been the virtual disappearance of those Party-military animosities that dominated the Khrushchev era, especially the sharp cleavages over resource allocations and institutional roles that formerly divided the civilian and military leadership. The current Defense Minister is a civilian by background and upbringing, Brezhnev is a self-appointed Marshal of the Soviet Union, and military interests are solidly represented in a variety of high-level governmental organs, ranging from the Defense Council and the Military-Industrial Commission to the CPSU Central Committee and the Politburo itself. This reaffirms that whatever doctrine may insist upon, it is conscious leadership choice--in the Soviet Union no less than elsewhere--that most heavily affects the character and direction of military investment programs. What is distinctive about the Soviet case is that harmony between doctrine and programs (given the necessary leadership cooperation) is made all the easier when adjudication of internal conflicts can be carried out with the iron discipline that has long been a hallmark of the Soviet political process.

#### CHARACTER AND GOALS OF THE SOVIET MILITARY BUILDUP

Throughout the post-Khrushchev era, a major motivation of the leadership has been to add substance to the image of Soviet military power and thereby invest Soviet doctrine with a degree of credibility it plainly lacked during the Khrushchev incumbency. The impetus for



this redirection of effort can be traced to a number of embarrassments the Soviet Union sustained as a result of Khrushchev's failure to provide adequate support to the material needs of the Soviet armed forces. These included, most notably, the explosion of the missile-gap myth through U-2 and satellite photography, the failure of Soviet threats to command American respect during the several Berlin crises and other confrontations of the late 1950s, and particularly the humiliating debacle the Soviet Union experienced as a result of superior American power and resolve during the Cuban missile crisis. The effect of these accumulated insults to Soviet pride was to instill in the new leadership a firm determination never again to tolerate such effrontery on the part of its major enemy.<sup>18</sup>

Although details are hard to come by, the military programs of the Brezhnev regime that have yielded such an impressive force posture today most likely did not emanate from a single decision. At the outset, the new leadership was probably not concerned about much more than eliminating the pronounced inferiority that had hitherto characterized the Soviet position in the military balance. Most notably by means of the SS-11 (a small, relatively inexpensive, and technically retrograde ICBM by prevailing Soviet standards), the Soviet leadership initially sought only to close the numbers gap with the United States as quickly as possible and probably did not nurture more ambitious strategic goals.

With the deepening American involvement in Vietnam and consequent slackening of effort in the strategic competition, however, the Soviets may have come to sense an attractive opportunity to press ahead toward more expansive force improvements. Such a perception may have been further encouraged by the beginnings of SALT and detente, which reflected a growing American willingness to settle for some vaguely-defined nuclear "parity" and to forgo further arms competition in the interests of "stability"--a concept long anathema to Soviet military logic.

In all events, by the end of the 1960s the Soviet Union had entered full swing into a military construction effort aimed at providing the means to fight credibly across the entire range of conflict, both nuclear and conventional. Whatever deliberations and decisions that may have gone before it, this buildup represented an impressive con-

firmation of the leadership's commitment to the "all-arms" rhetoric that, for years, had dominated Soviet military declaratory policy.

One of the more disturbing features of the Soviet defense effort for U.S. and NATO planners is the apparent absence of any sizing criteria for determining its ultimate magnitude. Instead, the Soviet leadership appears determined to acquire as much military hardware as its armed forces can reasonably assimilate, within the limits of technical and fiscal constraints and the willingness of the United States to tolerate it without implementing determined offsetting measures. This prospect is not encouraging for the future of arms control or Soviet-American relations, but it is a natural outgrowth of the pronounced combat orientation of Soviet military doctrine. Given its pervasive war-fighting focus, Soviet doctrine simply recognizes no measures of "sufficiency" or arbitrary stopping points in the acquisition of weapons and materiel. There is, for example, no known Soviet political-bureaucratic or budgetary constraint of the sort that, until recently, forced the USAF tactical air forces to remain limited to 26 active fighter wings. To be sure, the Soviets can probably be counted on to observe the letter of verifiable arms control agreements to which they are signatories. Beyond that, they are likely to continue pressing for every quantitative and qualitative advantage in relative military power that their military structure can accommodate.

One of the certitudes of Soviet doctrine is that there are no certitudes in war. As a consequence, commanders require as much quantitative strength in combat forces and support assets as they can get to hedge against the tendency of things to devolve in unexpected ways in the confusion of battle. Particularly if resource constraints are not a prime driver of military investment programs (as appears the case in the Soviet Union), one of the surest ways to minimize risk and uncertainty in strategic planning is to overinsure against anticipated needs with large numbers of first-echelon and reserve forces, whether intercontinental nuclear weapons or general-purpose assets. Aside from the leadership's principled support for a robust military posture, there is probably no single factor behind the continuing Soviet force expansion effort more influential than the notion that one can never

have enough strength to confront the unknown and cope comfortably in the fog of war.

Interestingly, there is little uniquely "Soviet" about this approach to military requirements. Not only their stress on the importance of numbers, but virtually all their major doctrinal edicts (on the commanding importance of the offensive, on the indispensability of seizing and maintaining the initiative, on the necessity of tailoring ends to means and not attempting the impossible, and so on) can be traced back to the pages of the 19th-century European military classics.<sup>19</sup> The profound differences that separate Soviet strategy from that of the United States mainly reflect dissimilarities between Soviet and American strategic cultures and defense processes, not any inherent incapacity of one side or the other to appreciate military logic. As noted earlier, American strategic concepts are largely artifacts of civilian thinkers and decisionmakers, who have set the drumbeat of U.S. national security policy over the years. Although the services continue to predominate in formulating action policy (the SIOP, RDF plans, and similar contingency options), they have only tangential influence on resource allocation--which ultimately determines the size and composition of U.S. forces.

In the Soviet case, by contrast, those responsible for formulating doctrine and strategy, setting R&D requirements, selecting weapons for deployment, and sizing the forces wear uniforms and are all but indistinguishable from one another. Put differently, contemporary U.S. strategic policy is less characteristically "American" than merely "civilian." Soviet doctrinal views, for their part, are less uniquely "Soviet" than simply "military." The differences between the two stem principally from asymmetries in the composition of the strategic elites of the two countries, rather than from any more deeply-rooted societal or intellectual differences between the superpowers.<sup>20</sup> Most American military professionals would find themselves readily conversant with their Soviet counterparts, and a visitor from the Prussian *Kriegsakademie* steeped in traditional Clausewitzian philosophy would most likely adjudge the United States, not the Soviet Union, to be the country more egregiously out of step with his understanding of military common sense.

A question of continuing concern to U.S. and NATO planners involves the ultimate ends toward which this Soviet military effort is directed. Obviously, there is no basis in the evidence publicly available to permit anything other than informed speculation on this score. Insofar as the outlook for Soviet military programs is caught up in the uncertain vagaries of domestic politics, even authoritative Soviet planners probably cannot say for sure what the long-term future holds. Probably the best answer we can give here, based on historical precedent and the facts of Soviet organizational life, is that the Soviet leaders are pursuing no "master plan" beyond simply striving to underwrite Soviet military doctrine to the best of their ability. Those inclined to impute more sinister motivations or unitary purpose to Soviet force improvements fail to appreciate either the Soviet Union's healthy respect for the consequences of war or the extraordinary capacity of the Soviet bureaucratic byzantium to keep the left hand from knowing what the right one is doing.

It would be foolhardy in the extreme to deprecate the willingness of Soviet leaders to use force in any circumstances where they felt that necessity left them no alternative. Nevertheless, they are anything but prone to cavalier adventurism--whatever their objective military capabilities might be. Perhaps the most balanced explanation of the Soviet buildup was that offered by Herbert Goldhamer over a decade ago, who described it as an exercise in "banking" power against the uncertain requirements of a future crisis whose contours and consequences the Soviets, by definition, could have no way of anticipating.<sup>21</sup>

#### DEVELOPMENTS IN COMBAT MISSIONS AND FORCES

The main emphasis of the Soviet defense effort under Brezhnev has been directed toward striving to close gaps between mission requirements and operational capabilities in all categories of force employment addressed by Soviet doctrine and strategy. Throughout the postwar era, Soviet ground forces have remained more than adequate (both numerically and qualitatively) to support Soviet tactical repertoires and theater war objectives, particularly against the NATO Center Region. Until the present buildup moved into high gear beginning in the late 1960s,

however, most other declared Soviet mission needs were left substantially unmet by actual capabilities in the field. In the strategic realm, the peacetime deterrence function could claim a measure of backing by the embryonic ICBM and SLBM inventories of the Strategic Rocket Forces and the Navy, but it was never clear to Soviet leaders (as Moscow's backdown in the Cuban crisis attested) whether those capabilities would enforce Western restraint when core interests on both sides were at stake. Moreover, the counterforce preemption option that lay at the heart of Moscow's emerging strategy for nuclear war stood completely devoid of any tangible backstopping due to the gross numerical and performance deficiencies of early-generation Soviet ballistic missiles.<sup>22</sup>

Adding further insult to this inadequacy were a variety of shortcomings in the composition and strength of other Soviet combat arms. With the Soviet Navy essentially a coastal defense force lacking significant strategic reach and Military Transport Aviation configured solely for intratheater and rear-area resupply, Soviet global power projection assets were all but nonexistent. Soviet tactical airpower remained in the shadow of the ground forces, was restricted to providing only local battlefield interdiction and close-air support, and had no independent offensive capabilities. Long-Range Aviation possessed only a token intercontinental attack capability and was grossly outmatched by the U.S. Strategic Air Command. Its numerous medium bombers oriented toward peripheral strike missions were outmoded and vulnerable to enemy air defenses. Even the widely proliferated home-defense fighters and SAMs of PVO Strany, despite their vast numerical strength, afforded scant intercept capabilities against U.S. bombers flying in the low-level ingress mode that had become the standard SAC penetration and survival tactic. Altogether, despite the numerically imposing size of the Soviet armed forces, the Soviet concept of war remained virtually a paper doctrine for all practical purposes.

Even today, the Soviet Union has yet to meet adequately some of the more important of these mission needs--particularly in the realm of homeland defense. Nevertheless, the progressive shakedown of the Soviet mission set and the determined efforts of the Brezhnev regime

to match its military requirements with appropriate hardware equities have plainly resulted in a Soviet posture with diverse potential and substantially enhanced credibility for supporting Soviet global ambitions. It remains now to consider briefly where Soviet military capabilities stand today and where they may be headed over the coming decade.

To begin with, the growing consistency between doctrine and forces, the progressively tighter matching of mission needs with deployed assets, and the fact that most capital Soviet weapons likely to be procured by the end of the 1980s are already observable in R&D or prototype testing all suggest that trends in Soviet force improvement during the foreseeable future will be more incremental and less dramatic than those that marked the greater portion of the Brezhnev era. Of course, we can expect the Soviets to continue to press hard on the frontiers of technology in search of breakthrough areas (especially in air and missile defense and antisubmarine warfare) that might permit them to alter the strategic balance to their decisive advantage. By and large, however, they will probably continue pursuing their mission support efforts primarily by relying on their tried and proven approach of gradual product improvement rather than radical innovation.<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, with the mounting buy-in costs of complex and sophisticated weaponry (to which the Soviets are no more immune than anyone else) and the steadily expanding lead-times between concept definition and operational deployment of such weapons, Soviet planners will most likely be driven increasingly to reassess their traditional practice of routinely substituting quantity for quality. The result, if this occurs, will necessarily be a steady decline in the numerical growth of Soviet forces--even though this may be offset by commensurate improvements in their performance and combat leverage. Interestingly, a byproduct of this development could well be a Soviet military management system increasingly plagued by the same sorts of maintainability problems and cost vs. quality tradeoff dilemmas that have recently risen to such public notoriety in the United States.<sup>24</sup>

In the realm of intercontinental attack, the main Soviet emphasis will continue to be placed on acquiring a comprehensive hard-target capability against U.S. land-based ICBMs that will give the Soviet

Union a credible preemption option and also permit retention of substantial reserve forces for follow-on operations. Barring a complete collapse of the arms control process, the overall numbers of ICBMs and SLBMs (both launchers and warheads) will probably remain capped by tacit Soviet obeisance to prevailing SALT II restrictions.<sup>25</sup> Within these numerical constraints, however, we can expect to see steady Soviet improvements in accuracy and targeting flexibility.

In the event that MX, with its own appreciable counterforce capability, should ever see the light of day in a survivable basing mode, Soviet planners will also want to hedge against this threat with appropriate countermeasures. A high-confidence U.S. silo-killing capability could be very disruptive to Soviet strategic planning, since the Soviet Union relies on fixed ICBMs to a far greater extent than the United States does. Such countermeasures could come in the form of both increased Soviet silo-hardening efforts and a gradual trend toward land mobility along the lines of the SS-20, perhaps in their fifth-generation ICBMs now in advanced development. Finally, we might see over the coming decade a gradual blurring of the former distinctions between land- and sea-based missile forces, as the USSR continues to perfect SLBMs with enhanced accuracy and intercontinental ranges that would allow them to be launched from protected sanctuaries beyond the reach of Western ASW.

On the receiving end of the strategic equation, Soviet prospects for aerospace defense look substantially less appealing because of the numerous difficulties that will continue to frustrate Soviet efforts to deal with enemy penetration capabilities that either exist now or lie on the immediate horizon. Much has been made of Soviet R&D efforts in lasers and directed-energy weapons; most knowledgeable observers agree, however, that any deployable Soviet capability of this sort will not be available until the latter years of this century at the earliest. As for more near-term possibilities, the Soviets are known to be developing AWACS-type battle-management platforms; improved interceptors with look-down/shoot-down capabilities against bombers and cruise missiles; advanced surface-to-air missiles for engaging low- and medium-altitude airbreathing threats; and better exoatmospheric ABMs

for engaging enemy ballistic missiles. Constraints imposed by the ABM Treaty (assuming it survives its impending ten-year review relatively intact), however, are likely to inhibit any major Soviet deployment efforts in the last category. The numerous tactical circumstances that appear likely to continue favoring the penetrativity of aerodynamic vehicles (particularly once low-observability "stealth" systems become operationally available toward the end of this decade) also promise to render PVO Strany's efforts to deal with these threats a continued uphill battle.<sup>26</sup> Probably the only realistic counsel of optimism for Soviet planners in the realm of home defense is the hope that a truly effective Soviet counterforce capability might be able to substantially draw down American, British, and French nuclear offensive forces in a preemptive attack, thereby offering PVO Strany the comparative advantage of dealing with a heavily degraded offensive threat from a fully-generated alert posture. This prospect can only be regarded by Soviet leaders as cold comfort. The likelihood that even such a degraded enemy capability would still be able to inflict grave retaliatory damage on the USSR promises to remain a major factor inhibiting the Soviets from indulging in excessive risk-taking.

For lesser levels of conflict, the Soviet armed forces are on a much more positive footing. The Soviet ground forces have undergone fewer dramatic changes than other force elements in recent years, as a consequence of their enduring mission charter and their continued numerical impressiveness. Indeed, notwithstanding some overall manpower growth during the past decade, the ground forces have sustained a perceptible adverse shift in their tooth-to-tail ratio as a result of heightened allocations of troop strength to battlefield support and command and control functions. Nevertheless, the gradual tapering off of Soviet ground-force manning promises to be more than handily offset by ongoing Soviet efforts to achieve greater flexibility, versatility, and operational leverage through emphasis on increased interchangeability between armored and motorized rifle divisions. These efforts stand to be supplemented by collateral activities aimed at developing specialized divisions with capabilities tailored for discrete missions (such as airborne operations and remote power projection) and discrete theaters



of operations (China or the Persian Gulf) that lie outside the boundaries of traditional Soviet planning for the European scenario.<sup>27</sup>

As for in-theater "strategic" forces, the expanding SS-20 inventory, along with other Soviet nuclear systems deployed opposite NATO, has amplified the leverage of the Soviet ICBM posture in defusing NATO's former advantage in escalation dominance. With Soviet parity in central forces now holding U.S. intercontinental attack assets at bay, and Moscow's strengthened theater nuclear capabilities pressing hard on the credibility of NATO's threat to escalate with its own nuclear forces, the Soviet Union has increasingly moved toward a position where it could dominate a NATO-Warsaw Pact war as a result of its superior conventional capabilities.

In the tactical air realm, Frontal Aviation has decisively shed its former status as a subordinate adjunct of the ground forces and has acquired both the mission and the necessary hardware to conduct deep offensive strikes against virtually the entire NATO rear-area target inventory. Because of its continued lack of good hard-structure conventional munitions, Frontal Aviation remains incapable of destroying aircraft shelters and runways with high confidence and would be hard put to disarm NATO's theater nuclear forces in a surprise air offensive. Nevertheless, it has an impressive capability for severely hampering NATO's fighter sortie generation capability. This, in turn, could contribute substantially to the Pact's ability to achieve theater air superiority under the protective umbrella of a Soviet nuclear preemptive threat.<sup>28</sup> In such circumstances, combined Soviet and Warsaw Pact ground elements might have enough time to carry out a conventional blitzkrieg aimed at seizing and consolidating a large portion of NATO territory. This capacity to hamper effective NATO conventional opposition is even more disconcerting if one also considers the possible use of chemical weapons, which currently remain a virtual Soviet monopoly.<sup>29</sup>

None of this is to say that NATO planners are without effective counter-threats and options that might disincline Soviet decisionmakers from attempting such a campaign in the first place in most conditions of East-West crisis. However, were a conventional war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact to occur for whatever reason, the Soviet side would be

able to call on disturbingly effective capabilities for prosecuting it toward a favorable conclusion, so long as its opponents remained unable or unwilling to raise the stakes through nuclear escalation.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, the Soviets have made major strides over the past decade in their capabilities for war at sea and power projection. On the first count, the Soviet Navy has moved well beyond its traditional role as a "spoiler" of enemy naval activities and has become a truly multi-mission service with global reach. Its expanded mission set now includes strategic nuclear attack, antisubmarine warfare, and selective sea control in open-ocean areas increasingly removed from Soviet shores. Within these broadened mission areas, Soviet naval weapons and forces continue to improve and offer new combat options to Soviet planners. Examples include the nuclear cruiser *Kirov*, the ALFA fast-attack submarine (probably intended for use against U.S. carrier battle groups), and the prospective development of a large-deck carrier intended for launching and recovering high-performance fighter aircraft.<sup>31</sup>

For peacetime and intracrisis power projection, the Soviet Navy has increased its heavy-lift transport capability and is acquiring the rudiments of a credible assault force through such platforms as the *Ivan Rogov* roll-on/roll-off amphibious landing craft. The lift and remote deployment potential of the Navy is further complemented by the expanded assets of Military Transport Aviation. The latter's new-found operational leverage was first vividly displayed during the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. It has periodically supported Soviet foreign policy in subsequent years with equally effective and professional service in such areas as Angola, Ethiopia, and--most recently--Afghanistan.

Soviet air and sealift capabilities will undoubtedly continue to grow in the coming decade in consonance with Moscow's determination to seek enhanced global influence and "presence." To support this ambition to the fullest, of course, the Soviet Navy will have to improve considerably its present means of resupply and support, either through development of an overseas basing infrastructure (which has hitherto remained elusive) or a substantially reinforced underway replenishment capability. Nevertheless, the Soviet Navy has become a mature and

sophisticated blue-water fleet with unquestioned worldwide mobility. Its evolving missions and capabilities leave little doubt that the Soviet Union has entered the power projection game in a major way.

#### OVERVIEW AND OUTLOOK

A dominant hallmark of the Soviet defense buildup under Brezhnev has been the remarkable continuity of effort that has sustained it. The Soviet leaders see themselves in a long-term competition with the West for global influence and ascendancy. In this contest, persistence and patience are among their most enduring attributes. Their advantages include an ideologically-rooted sense of purpose, an established institutional memory, and a decisionmaking environment largely unfettered by the sort of internal pressures that so heavily complicate the policy processes of democratic societies. Barring a fundamental change in the structure of Soviet politics, these comparative advantages (if one can call them that) promise to guarantee the Soviets a continued edge in strategic competitiveness for the indefinite future. By contrast, the United States and its NATO allies will necessarily continue to do their own defense planning largely from budget cycle to budget cycle. Given the fractious nature of their internal debates and the inherent tendencies of recurrent leadership turnover to keep their defense programs in continual turmoil, there is little chance that the Western powers can ever match the Soviet Union in the constancy of its strategic vision.

This essay has emphasized the stability of Soviet military thought since the early 1960s. None of the foregoing, however, has intended to suggest that Soviet operational concepts are unamenable to change. The comprehensive expansion and modernization of Soviet forces since the advent of the Brezhnev regime have brought Soviet combat capabilities into close congruence with long-standing Soviet doctrinal edicts. At the same time, these Soviet postural innovations have increasingly made possible new Soviet force employment options either expressly ruled out or hitherto unaddressed by the Soviet military literature.<sup>32</sup> In the years ahead, we can anticipate a steady maturation of Soviet doctrine, contingency plans, and operating repertoires in a way that

accommodates the broadened range of options afforded by these new Soviet capabilities. Whatever changes that may occur, however, are unlikely to make life for U.S. and NATO defense planners any easier. While implementation strategies will continue to evolve and diversify in parallel with improvements in Soviet technology and capability, the underlying principles of Soviet doctrine that stress the importance of assuring deterrence through the pursuit of plausible war options show every likelihood of remaining established Soviet articles of faith.

Given this prospect for continued doctrinal stability and continued force refinement aimed at lending enhanced support to Soviet doctrinal principles, any resurgent U.S. effort to draw the Soviets into an arms dialogue based on a common strategic language would most probably be in vain. Far more likely to impress the Soviets will be a measured effort to match U.S. and NATO capabilities with mission needs--without flourish or fanfare--in a way calculated to deprive Soviet operational plans of any realistic possibility of success. Fortunately, both American and most European defense officials now recognize and accept the necessity of this latter approach. Those who continue to lament the "Reagan defense buildup" and the "new arms race" it threatens to occasion fail to appreciate that current U.S. policy is largely an attempt to make up for numerous years of past failure on the part of the United States to hold up its end of the competition due to preoccupation with the Vietnam War, fixation on misguided "mutual assured destruction" thinking, and consequent underfunding of a broad variety of strategic and general-purpose force needs.<sup>33</sup> Today, the United States and NATO face multiple deficiencies in military capability that all constitute equally "top-priority" problems. Restoring U.S. ICBM survivability, replacing the aging B-52, acquiring a credible remote-area power projection capability with associated naval and airlift components, and attending to the legitimate demands of tactical air and theater nuclear force modernization are only four among many. In light of these, the real question is not whether U.S. programs threaten a new "arms race" or constitute an unprecedented military "buildup," but whether the fiscal resources and popular support available in the immediate future will be sufficient to sustain these planned force improvements long

enough to permit the United States to undo the legacy of their neglect during years past.

Despite the magnitude of this challenge, engaging the Soviet Union in the long-term competition need not be an insurmountable task for the West. What the United States and the NATO countries may lack by way of institutional mechanisms for imposing extended discipline on their defense programs is offset by their superior technological prowess and adaptability in the face of changing political-military circumstances. The preceding discussion has emphasized the more disturbing elements of Soviet doctrine and planning. It has not, however, suggested that the Soviet Union is without significant problems in the military realm. This is not the place for a detailed review of those liabilities, but it bears stressing that the Soviet leadership has ample reasons of its own to look to the future with less than exuberant self-confidence. For one thing, despite the ongoing Afghanistan episode, the Soviet Union has had no direct combat experience of a significant nature since World War II and doubtless harbors genuine uncertainties about how its forces (both material and human) would fare under the stresses of a full-blown confrontation with the West. Relatedly, the very rigidities of the Soviet military management system that permit uninterrupted planning and orderly implementation of Soviet defense programs in peacetime may well deny the leadership the flexibility and real-time responsiveness that would be required to cope with maximum effectiveness in a crisis.

Even in peacetime, Soviet leaders face internal and external pressures that almost surely raise valid questions about the limits of achievable military growth. The continued intractability of the Poland situation, for example, offers them a daily reminder of the burdens of empire. The continued presence of a hostile China on the Soviet Union's eastern flank constitutes another planning uncertainty unique to the Soviet leadership and doubtless occasions much circumspection in Soviet contingency planning against the West. The increasingly prominent racial tensions generated by the steady growth in percentage of ethnic minorities in the manpower composition of the Soviet armed forces make up a third ground for legitimate Soviet anxiety by raising questions about how reliable Soviet ground forces would be in any

circumstance short of a fundamental threat to Soviet survival.<sup>34</sup> Finally, the Soviet Union--like all modern powers -is saddled with seemingly irreversible growth trends in the development and procurement costs of capital weapons systems. Every year since 1960, Soviet defense expenditures have increased in percentage of total outlays without interruption, encroaching deeper and deeper on needed investment in other sectors of the economy.<sup>35</sup> The Soviet leaders have thus far appeared willing to accept this burden as a necessary price for meeting their baseline force requirements and show no indication of feeling threatened by the specter of a bilateral military spending contest with the United States. Nevertheless, the increasing strains on the Soviet economy that have been generated by this continuing buildup raise the possibility that they may eventually have to impose more stringent budgetary topline on their defense effort, with a commensurate tapering off in the rate of Soviet military expansion.

For these and other reasons, the Soviet military challenge should be regarded not merely as a "threat" but also as a lucrative opportunity for purposeful Western counterplanning. To be sure, because of the high stakes and severe penalties for misjudgment, the pressures to hedge against worst cases are understandably compelling. Certainly it would be dangerous in the extreme to underestimate the effectiveness of Soviet military forces in unrestricted war, however valid our assumptions about Soviet caution and risk aversion may be. This does not mean, however, that Western planners are reduced solely to accepting worst-case possibilities as certainties or to engaging Soviet programs head-on in a mindless confrontation of countervailing weapons procurement. As Major General Jasper Welch has observed, "there is a certain unbecoming fatalism about routinely allowing the Soviet military a free ride on their existing vulnerabilities just because we 'might' be wrong or they 'might' fix them."<sup>36</sup>

Conversely, we must resist the temptation that has recently become fashionable in some circles to discount Soviet strengths on the misguided premise that known Soviet weaknesses constitute an adequate basis for Western complacency.<sup>37</sup> The challenge before American and NATO defense analysts lies precisely in the middle ground of soberly recog-

nizing Soviet strengths for what they are--and then systematically considering how identifiable Soviet vulnerabilities might be exploited through clever tactics and planning in compensation for our inability to match the Soviet defense effort weapon for weapon and dollar for ruble.

NOTES

1. For elaboration, see Kevin N. Lewis, *The Reagan Defense Budget: Prospects and Pressures* (The Rand Corporation, P-6721, December 1981).
2. Among the more notable journalistic tracts that have successfully influenced and exploited this mounting undercurrent of popular concern are Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1982) and *Nuclear War: What's In It for You?* (New York: Pocket Books, 1982). The latter of these is largely the product of a former Carter administration NSC staffer. Both convey a tone of having just "discovered" certain unpleasant realities of the deterrence dilemma that have long been well known facts of nuclear life.
3. See Barry Sussman and Robert G. Kaiser, "Survey Finds 3-to-1 Backing for A-Freeze," *Washington Post*, April 29, 1982. This, it bears noting, despite the fact that the same respondents also indicated by two to one their belief that the Soviet Union is ahead of the United States in nuclear weapons and by six to one that the USSR would secretly violate any nuclear freeze agreement the two nations might sign.
4. Spearheading this campaign have been two widely-cited Soviet English-language pamphlets written expressly for foreign audiences in response to the Reagan administration's various statements on the Soviet military challenge: *The Threat to Europe* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1981) and *Whence the Threat to Peace* (Moscow: Military Publishing House, USSR Ministry of Defense, 1982). Soviet public repudiation of any doctrinal orientation toward offensive war-fighting, however, predates President Reagan's election and goes back to the Carter years. See, for example, Don Oberdorfer, "Soviet Marshal Denies Kremlin Seeks Nuclear Superiority," *Washington Post*, August 3, 1979.
5. Even putative matters of "fact" can entail important elements of ambiguity. An example can be seen in the issue of the CEP of the Soviet SS-18 ICBM. The "secret" component of this question--denied to Western observers--is what the Soviets *believe* to be the accuracy of that weapon, based on the evidence provided by their rather limited flight test experience. The residual "mystery" concerns what the CEP of the SS-18 force as a whole actually *is*. This cannot be confidently known, even by the Soviets themselves, in the absence of a full-fledged ICBM exchange.
6. For a fuller development of this argument, see Benjamin S. Lambeth, "Soviet Strategic Conduct and the Prospects for Stability," in Christoph Bertram, ed., *The Future of Strategic Deterrence*, Adelphi Papers No. 161 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1980), pp. 27-38.



7. This perspective was first articulated by Bernard Brodie in his "The Atomic Bomb and American Security," Memorandum No. 18 (New Haven: Yale Institute of International Studies, 1945) and was amplified further in his landmark volume, *The Absolute Weapon* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946). It was reaffirmed in its essentials over three decades later in Brodie's last article before his death in 1978, "The Development of Nuclear Strategy," *International Security*, Spring 1978, pp. 65-83.
8. The most recent official expression of this view was Secretary of Defense Weinberger's assertion that despite the Reagan administration's determination to deny the USSR a credible war option, "we do not believe there could be any 'winner' in a nuclear war" (Letter to the Editor, *Los Angeles Times*, August 25, 1982). Weinberger notes, however, that "we are certainly planning not to be defeated." When pressed on one occasion as to the implied difference here between "winning" and "prevailing," he replied: "You show me a Secretary of Defense who's not planning to prevail and I'll show you a Secretary of Defense who ought to be impeached" (quoted in Richard Halloran, "Weinberger Angered by Reports on War Strategy," *New York Times*, August 24, 1982). Despite the greater than usual heat the Reagan administration has invited upon itself as a consequence of some of its less circumspect pronouncements on nuclear policy matters, its strategic guidance does not differ in its conceptual fundamentals from either that of the Carter administration or the Nixon/Ford administrations that preceded it.
9. This point was expressed with elegant simplicity by Khrushchev in his memoirs: "If the enemy starts a war against you, then it is your duty to do everything possible to survive the war and to achieve victory in the end." *Khrushchev Remembers*, trans. by Strobe Talbott (New York: Bantam Books, 1970), p. 570.
10. By "the Soviets," we are talking about those civilian and military officials at the highest levels of the Soviet defense establishment whose views on the threat and the requirements that stem from it largely govern the complexion of Soviet military programs. Undoubtedly widespread--if often unobservable--differences obtain within this community concerning questions of resource priorities and other implementation matters. It is a premise of this essay, however, that a broad consensus exists throughout the Soviet elite regarding fundamental Soviet military needs.
11. See, in particular, Richard Pipes, "Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight and Win a Nuclear War," *Commentary*, July 1977, pp. 21-34. A more balanced and properly qualified treatment of this controversial issue, which resonates well with the argument advanced here, may be found in Stephen Meyer, "Would the Soviets Start a Nuclear War?" *Washington Post*, December 4, 1981.
12. Richard Pipes, "Why the USSR Wants SALT II," Occasional Paper (Washington, D.C.: Committee on the Present Danger, September 1979).

13. For further discussion, see Benjamin S. Lambeth, *Risk and Uncertainty in Soviet Deliberations About War* (The Rand Corporation, R-2687-AF, October 1981).
14. The standard English translation is Marshal V.D. Sokolovskii, *Soviet Military Strategy*, with an introduction and commentary by Herbert S. Dinerstein, Leon Goure, and Thomas W. Wolfe (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963).
15. *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*, trans. by Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little Brown, 1974), p. 13.
16. Quoted at a Kremlin press conference, *New York Times*, November 9, 1959. Khrushchev's disparaging attitude toward military men was almost legendary. A firm disbeliever in the value of surface combatants in the nuclear age, he would often point to children's toy boats in ponds during strolls through Moscow parks with foreign visitors and refer to them jokingly as "our navy," no doubt to the profound irritation of his admirals. Another symbolic illustration was provided in a remark he reportedly made to Pierre Salinger during a visit at one of the Kremlin's country dachas. The two men were practicing at shooting clay pigeons with shotguns. When Salinger proved himself clearly the inferior marksman, Khrushchev commented: "Don't feel badly. I've got generals who can't hit anything either." Pierre Salinger, *With Kennedy* (New York: Avon Books, 1966), p. 285.
17. Marshal M.V. Zakharov, "The Imperative Demand of Our Time," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, February 4, 1965.
18. The Cuban missile crisis has frequently been touted as a casebook example of successful U.S. coercive diplomacy. Viewed with two decades' hindsight, however, it should more properly be regarded a brilliant tactical victory that produced some very discomfiting long-term consequences for the United States. A former U.S. Ambassador to Moscow reminded us several years ago that the Soviet negotiator during the deliberations leading to the missile withdrawal, Vassiliy Kuznetzov, repeatedly told his American counterpart, John J. McCloy, that "the Soviet Union would never again face a 4-to-1 missile inferiority." Jacob D. Beam, "Dangers of Relying on Weapons Superiority," *Washington Star*, July 15, 1979.
19. Lenin himself insisted that Clausewitz's axiom regarding war as a violent extension of politics constituted the "theoretical foundation for the meaning of every war." Quoted in Edward Meade Earle, "Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin: Soviet Concepts of War," in Earle, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), p. 323. For a summary review of how the military classicists (particularly Clausewitz and Jomini) influenced the formation of Soviet military thought during the years prior to World War II, see Raymond L. Garthoff, *Soviet Military Doctrine* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1953), pp. 51-58. See also R.H. Baker, "The Origins

of Soviet Military Doctrine," *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute*, March 1976, pp. 38-43.

20. As Stanley Sienkiewicz has aptly put this point, "the explanation for the Soviet solution to the problem of security in the nuclear age derives more from the fact that it is a solution devised by the *military* profession, and not that it was devised by the *Soviet* military profession.... The notion of sufficiency or parity, on the other hand, is not merely an *American* invention. It is more importantly a *civilian* invention." "SALT and Soviet Nuclear Doctrine," *International Security*, Spring 1978, p. 92.
21. Herbert Goldhamer, *The Soviet Union in a Period of Strategic Parity* (The Rand Corporation, R-889-PR, November 1971).
22. At the time of Khrushchev's ouster in 1964, the Soviet YANKEE-class SLBM submarine had not yet been deployed, and the SRF possessed only some 200 SS-7 and SS-8 ICBMs, mostly in soft-site launch configurations. By contrast, the United States was well on its way to completing a missile deployment program featuring 1000 Minuteman ICBMs and 656 Polaris SLBMs.
23. Among the most perceptive analytical treatments of this Soviet weapons acquisition style may be found in Arthur J. Alexander, *R&D in Soviet Aviation* (The Rand Corporation, R-589-PR, November 1970) and, by the same author, *Armor Development in the Soviet Union and the United States* (The Rand Corporation, R-1860-NA, September 1976). See also Richard D. Ward, "Soviet Practice in Designing and Procuring Military Aircraft," *Aeronautics and Astronautics*, September 1981, pp. 24-38.
24. Much of this notoriety has been occasioned by a recent (and highly controversial) journalistic critique of U.S. weapons acquisition practices by James Fallows, *National Defense* (New York: Random House, 1981). Fallows makes a major point of contrasting allegedly over-sophisticated and technically unreliable U.S. weapons like the F-15 fighter and the M-1 tank with their cheaper, simpler, and more serviceable Soviet counterparts. In doing so, he fails to recognize and give proper weight to the significant differences in manpower availability and cost that confront the American and Soviet defense establishments, respectively, and largely allow the Soviets to pursue "quantity" solutions to their military requirements. He also fails to note that several of the new fighters about to enter the Soviet Air Force inventory are quite comparable (in terms of sophistication and technical complexity) to those U.S. aircraft he so roundly deprecates.
25. This seems all the more possible given recent indications of serious Soviet interest (whether genuinely motivated or as another delaying tactic) in discussing deep bilateral arms cuts in the START arena. The tantalizing feature of the Soviet proposal is its suggested ceiling of 1800 strategic nuclear delivery vehicles

for each side, which would entail a force reduction of some 10 percent for the United States, yet upward of 25 percent for the Soviet Union. The ground for suspicion is that the proposal appears expressly aimed at the cruise missile and Trident D-5-- the two programmed U.S. weapons most feared by the Soviet Union. See Robert C. Toth, "U.S. Weighs Surprising Soviet Offer on A-Arms," *Los Angeles Times*, September 13, 1982.

26. The most detailed official commentary on the prospective capabilities of "stealth" aircraft may be found in "Statement by Secretary of Defense Harold Brown" and "Statement by William J. Perry, Undersecretary of Defense for Research and Engineering," Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), Washington, D.C., August 22, 1980. Regarding possible applications of this technology to ballistic reentry vehicles, see also Richard L. Garwin, "The Implications of Stealth," *Federation of American Scientists Public Interest Report*, December 1980, p. 3.
27. For further discussion, see John Erickson, *Soviet-Warsaw Pact Force Levels*, USSSI Report 76-2 (Washington, D.C.: United States Strategic Institute, 1978); Chris N. Donnelly, "Options in the Enemy Rear: Soviet Doctrine and Tactics," *International Defense Review*, No.1, January 1980, pp. 35-41; and Donald L. Madill, "The Continuing Evolution of the Soviet Ground Forces," *Military Review*, August 1982, pp. 52-68.
28. See John Erickson, "Some Developments in Soviet Tactical Aviation (Frontovaya Aviatsiya)," *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute*, September 1975, pp. 70-74; Colin Gray, "Soviet Tactical Airpower," *Air Force Magazine*, March 1977, pp. 62-71; and Colonel Lynn M. Hansen, "The Resurgence of Soviet Frontal Aviation," *Strategic Review*, Fall 1978, pp. 71-81. For a brief treatment of some operational impediments that might hinder a successful Soviet air campaign against NATO, see also Joshua M. Epstein, "On Conventional Deterrence in Europe: Questions of Soviet Confidence," *Orbis*, Spring 1982, pp. 71-86.
29. See Amoretta Hoeber and Joseph D. Douglass, Jr., "The Neglected Threat of Chemical Warfare," *International Security*, Summer 1978, pp. 55-82. U.S. development of chemical weapons was unilaterally halted during the Nixon administration and has remained moribund ever since. During the Carter years, it was commonly suggested by U.S. defense officials that a NATO threat to use tactical nuclear weapons would suffice to deter Soviet chemical weapons use. There was, and continues to be, good ground for questioning the credibility of such a threat in the absence of a countervailing NATO chemical warfare capability. During the past year, President Reagan sought to reinstitute the production and deployment of U.S. chemical weapons but was turned down by Congress.
30. This would be especially true were the Soviets to withhold attacks against selected countries (for example, France) or indicate a

willingness to limit their operations solely to all or part of West Germany. Although there is no evidence that such withhold options are a part of current Soviet contingency planning, they could be very plausible given the right circumstances of crisis and Soviet war objectives.

31. The Reagan administration has indicated that the Soviets could deploy a nuclear-powered carrier of some 60,000 tons with catapults and an air wing of 60 fighter aircraft toward the end of this decade. See *Soviet Military Power* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 1982), p. 41.
32. Examples include limited strategic warfare; counterforce-only attacks; selective attacks against enemy command and control facilities; war in space; crisis management and escalation control; and the use of land-based missiles against targets at sea.
33. The Soviet Union over the past decade has massively outspent the United States in military procurement. Between 1973 and 1979 alone, the Soviets are authoritatively estimated to have exceeded the American effort in this category by some \$100 billion. According to a Rand study conducted several years ago, an equivalent sum available to the United States would have completely covered procurement costs (in 1979 dollars) for the following U.S. programs that were planned at that time: the complete B-1 buy; the full MX ICBM force in its "race-track" shelter configuration; all programmed Trident missiles and submarines; all 7000 M-1 tanks planned for deployment, along with a matching number of infantry fighting vehicles and a full complement of new transport aircraft to give them intratheater mobility; and the total package of F-14, F-15, F-16, F-18, and A-10 aircraft intended for U.S. Air Force and Navy tactical airpower modernization. See Arthur J. Alexander, Abraham S. Becker, and William E. Hoehn, Jr., *The Significance of Divergent U.S.-USSR Military Expenditure* (The Rand Corporation, N-1000-AF, February 1979).
34. For further discussion, see S. Enders Wimbush and Alex Alexiev, *The Ethnic Factor in the Soviet Armed Forces* (The Rand Corporation, R-2787, March 1982).
35. See Abraham S. Becker, *The Burden of Soviet Defense: A Political-Economic Essay* (The Rand Corporation, R-2752-AF), October 1981.
36. "A Conceptual Approach to Countering Invasion Threats to NATO" (unpublished manuscript, June 1976), p. 6.
37. For a typical example, see Les Aspin, "The Soviet Soldier," *New York Times*, June 8, 1982.

